**6th Language Arts  
Independent Reading: Book Review/Recommendation**

Our goal is to gather together lists of books to recommend to readers your age. My hope is that we can publish these as a “recommended reading list” grouped by genre (on the class wiki, without your name) for others to actually use. Your work will represent the sixth grade at St. Mark’s, so our standards should be very high. If your work is as outstanding as I am sure it can be, we can make these reviews a regular part of our class blog, once it is established.

Please use the guide below and draw upon all your knowledge about effective, engaging writing.

1. **Brainstorm** the genres your book would fall into. We will create review teams for the most common genres. Each member of a team should choose a different book to recommend for the book list. Begin taking notes about the specific details to include about your book in your review. (Tuesday)
2. Begin **drafting** your book review (Wednesday). It should use the following format:

**Teaser:** This will appear on the cover page for the book list for your genre. Write two to three enticing sentences to “hook” your reader into reading your complete review. Use strong nouns and verbs. Write concisely, yet vigorously. Eliminate all unnecessary or “empty” words and phrases. A picture of the book’s cover should appear to the left of your teaser.  
  
**Descriptive Paragraph:** In one meaty paragraph, convey all the important information about your book. Mention the author, title, setting, main characters, and essential plot elements. Do not give any spoilers. Make this writing lively and engaging to draw your reader in; at the same time, make sure that you are accurate in your characterization of the book. Do not merely relay the plot; rather, give your reader a sense of what he or she will experience when reading the book.

**Analytical Paragraph**: This paragraph is more reflective about the book’s major themes and ideas, how it fits into the genre you have chosen, or how it is written. Do not feel that you have to address all of these things. Instead, choose what you wish to focus on as the main elements that set this book apart from others like it, those things that make it something you with to recommend to other readers. Continue to use details and to be specific in your writing. Avoid vague comments like “this is the best book I ever read…” or “this book is an amazing story….” Instead, try to figure out more precisely what makes it great and why it’s so good.

1. End the book review with the **complete publishing information** about the book and **a link** to where it might be purchased. Also **name the genre** your recommendation should be included in. If the book is in the **school library or our classroom library**, it might be a good idea to mention that as well.  
     
   Some tips:

* Refer to writers by their last names after you first mention their full names.
* Refer to the events of the novel in the present tense.
* Titles of book-length works and series should be in *italics.*
* Check spelling of specific names and places to make sure these are correct.
* Proofread and edit your review with care before turning it in. We cannot publish reviews with significant errors of spelling or grammar. Make sure, in particular, that all sentences are complete, that you avoid run-ons, and that you combine sentences appropriately whenever possible.
* Single space your final draft for publication purposes.

1. Bring your “best shot” draft of the review on Wednesday. Your draft should be typed. We will have a writing workshop in class, and this depends upon having something on paper to work with.
2. Revise your draft based on the feedback you receive in the workshop. Bring your revised and nearly complete essay to class on Friday to work on fine-tuning and editing.

Resource: Tess, “The Perfect Shot, by Elaine Alphin,” You Gotta Read This: Book Reviews by and for Middle Schooler. Blog Post. Published22 May 2009; accessed 3 October 2012. <http://c-t-l.org/bookblog/?p=259> .